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10/072,431	02/08/2002	Blair E. Nygren	019143.0349	2635
7590 Samir A. Bhavsar, Esq. Baker Botts L.L.P. 6th Floor 2001 Ross Avenue Dallas, TX 75201-2980		04/12/2007	EXAMINER DESHPANDE, KALYAN K	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER 3623
SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE		MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE	
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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/072,431	NYGREN ET AL.	
Examiner	Art Unit		
Kalyan K. Deshpande	3623		

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 08 February 2002.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-38 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) 19-23 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
6) Claim(s) 1-18 and 24-38 is/are rejected.
7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 11/20/06.

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____ .
5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) Other: ____ .

DETAILED ACTION

Introduction

1. The following is a non-final office action in response to the communications received on September 27, 2006 and January 18, 2007. Claims 1-18 and 24-38 are now pending in this application.

Election/Restrictions

2. Applicant's election without traverse of claims 1-18 and 24-37 in the reply filed on January 18, 2007 is acknowledged.

Response to Amendments

3. Examiner withdraws the objections to the specification based on Applicants' amendment to the specifications. Examiner acknowledges Applicants' new claim 38. Applicants' have not amended any claims in the most recent response.

Response to Arguments

4. Applicants' arguments filed on September 27, 2006 have been fully considered but are not found persuasive. Applicants argues i) Northcutt fails to teach "create a work item associated with the at least one message based on at least in part upon the work information, wherein the work item comprises an owner identifier" and "receive work information associated with at least one message determined by the dispatcher to be associated with a work assignment", specifically Northcutt does not teach a "work item", ii) Examiner improperly fail to provide evidence for the feature to "determine if any of a plurality of messages is associated with a work assignment", iii) there is no motivation to modify Northcutt, iv) Examiner asserted impermissible hindsight, v)

Northcutt fails to teach a work item that “comprises a first link to at least one of the evaluation, the recording, and the survey”, vi) Northcutt fails to teach a work item that “comprises a second link to at least one application used to perform the work assignment”, vii) Northcutt fails to teach every limitation in claim 12, viii) Examiner improperly read limitations from the Specifications into the claim, and ix) Northcutt and Ouchi fail to teach new independent claim 38. Applicants’ arguments towards claims 19-23 are now moot in light of the restriction requirement and Applicants’ withdrawal of claims 19-23 from consideration.

In response to Applicants’ argument Northcutt fails to teach “create a work item associated with the at least one message based on at least in part upon the work information, wherein the work item comprises an owner identifier” and “receive work information associated with at least one message determined by the dispatcher to be associated with a work assignment”, specifically Northcutt does not teach a “work item”, Examiner respectfully disagrees. Northcutt explicitly teaches “create a work item associated with the at least one message based at least in part upon the work information, wherein the work item comprises an owner identifier” (see ¶ 65; where a manager assigns the work item to a person responsible to complete the work assignment. Specifically, the manager receives a “request for service”. A request for service states an actual task that needs to be performed. Thus, a request for service is a work item the manager assigns.) and “receive work information associated with at least one message determined by the dispatcher to be associated with a work assignment” (see ¶ 65; where a manager receives information submitted by a requestor

for work to be done. This information received is work information and is associated to an RFS, the work assignment. A request for service states an actual task that needs to be performed. Thus, a request for service is a work item the manager assigns.). Examiner has made clearer that a request for service is the request for a task to be performed, which is the same as a work item. Examiner did not intend that a "message be a work item" but rather that messages regarding the work item are sent and received.

In response to Applicants' argument Examiner improperly fail to provide evidence for the feature to "determine if any of a plurality of messages is associated with a work assignment", Examiner respectfully disagrees. Examiner notes the following passage from the MPEP:

To adequately traverse such a finding, an applicant must specifically point out the supposed errors in the examiner's action, which would include stating why the noticed fact is not considered to be common knowledge or well-known in the art. See 37 CFR 1.111(b). See also *Chevenard*, 139 F.2d at 713, 60 USPQ at 241 ("[I]n the absence of any demand by appellant for the examiner to produce authority for his statement, we will not consider this contention."). A general allegation that the claims define a patentable invention without any reference to the examiner's assertion of official notice would be inadequate. If applicant adequately traverses the examiner's assertion of official notice, the examiner must provide documentary evidence in the next Office action if the rejection is to be maintained. See 37 CFR 1.104(c)(2). See also *Zurko*, 258 F.3d at 1386, 59 USPQ2d at 1697 ("[T]he Board [or examiner] must point to some concrete evidence in the record in support of these findings" to satisfy the substantial evidence test). If the examiner is relying on personal knowledge to support the finding of what is known in the art, the examiner must provide an affidavit or declaration setting forth specific factual statements and explanation to support the finding. See 37 CFR 1.104(d)(2). If applicant does not traverse the examiner's assertion of official notice or applicant's traverse is not adequate, the examiner should clearly indicate in the next Office action that the common knowledge or well-known in the art statement is taken to be admitted prior art because applicant either failed to traverse the examiner's assertion of official notice or that the traverse was inadequate. If the traverse was inadequate, the examiner should include an explanation as to why it was inadequate. (MPEP § 2144.03(C))

Applicant has not “specifically point[ed] out the supposed errors in the examiner's action, which would include stating why the noticed fact is not considered to be common knowledge or well-known in the art.” Applicant's broad request for references to support Examiner's statements of Official Notice amounts to nothing more than an unsupported challenge. For these reasons, “determine if any of a plurality of messages is associated with a work assignment” is taken to be admitted prior art because Applicant's traversal was inadequate.

In response to Applicants' argument there is no motivation to modify Northcutt, Examiner respectfully disagrees. Examiner previously asserted the advantage of “determine if any of a plurality of messages is associated with a work assignment” is that it enables the proper organization of information in that the appropriate personnel are associated with the appropriate information and it would have been obvious, at the time of the invention, to one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the feature to “determine if any of a plurality of messages is associated with a work assignment” with the Northcutt et al. system in order to facilitate the proper management of information, which is a goal of Northcutt et al. (see ¶ 2). Northcutt clearly has an objective to facilitate good resource management (see ¶ 2) and thus one would be motivated to modify Northcutt to include a feature that promotes this objective. Furthermore, Examiner has provided a distinct advantage to modify Northcutt. The strongest rationale for modifying or combining references is a recognition, expressly or impliedly in the prior art or drawn from a convincing line of reasoning based on established scientific principles or legal precedent, that some advantage or expected beneficial

result would have been produced by their combination. *In re Sernaker*, 702 F.2d 989, 994-95, 217 USPQ 1, 5-6 (Fed. Cir. 1983). See *MPEP 2144*.

In response to Applicants' argument Examiner asserted impermissible hindsight, Examiner respectfully disagrees. In response to applicant's argument that the examiner's conclusion of obviousness is based upon improper hindsight reasoning, it must be recognized that any judgment on obviousness is in a sense necessarily a reconstruction based upon hindsight reasoning. But so long as it takes into account only knowledge which was within the level of ordinary skill at the time the claimed invention was made, and does not include knowledge gleaned only from the applicant's disclosure, such a reconstruction is proper. See *In re McLaughlin*, 443 F.2d 1392, 170 USPQ 209 (CCPA 1971).

In response to Applicants' argument Northcutt fails to teach a work item that "comprises a first link to at least one of the evaluation, the recording, and the survey", Examiner respectfully disagrees. Northcutt clearly teaches "the work item further comprises a first link to the received message" (see ¶¶ 66 and 68; where a link is communicated to the owner of a RFS and to the submitter of the RFS.). Claim 10 further recites the limitations "the link to at least one of the evaluation, the recording, and the survey", which are already addressed by the rejection of claim 2; therefore the same rejections apply to this claim. The claim 2 rejection reads that Northcutt does not expressly teach the specific data recited; however, these differences are only found in the non-functional descriptive material and are not functionally involved in the steps recited nor do they alter the recited structural elements. The recited method steps

would be performed the same regardless of the specific data. Further, the structural elements remain the same regardless of the specific data. Thus, this descriptive material will not distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art in terms of patentability, see *In re Gulack*, 703 F.2d 1381, 1385, 217 USPQ 401, 404 (Fed. Cir. 1983); *In re Lowry*, 32 F.3d 1579, 32 USPQ2d 1031 (Fed. Cir. 1994); MPEP § 2106. Thus, limitations for a link to “the evaluation, the recording, and the survey” of claim 2 and of claim 10 are descriptive non-functional material and do not change the functionality of the invention. Since the limitations and the grounds for the rejection are the same, Examiner referred to a previous discussion of the exact same rejection in order to avoid repetition. Therefore, Examiner has clearly addressed every limitation of claim 10.

In response to Applicants’ argument Northcutt fails to teach a work item that “comprises a second link to at least one application used to perform the work assignment”, Examiner respectfully disagrees. Northcutt clearly teaches “comprises a second link to at least one application used to perform the work assignment” (see ¶¶ 60-63; where users are provided with an interface enabling them to link to resources and tools to perform modifications or additions to the work assignment.). Northcutt provides users with tools to perform functions to the work assignment. For example, a work item may include a request for a service status. Northcutt enables a user to modify the status of a work item, thereby performing the work item. Furthermore, Applicant’s arguments fail to comply with 37 CFR 1.111(b) because they amount to a general

allegation that the claims define a patentable invention without specifically pointing out how the language of the claims patentably distinguishes them from the references.

In response to Applicants' argument Northcutt fails to teach every limitation in claim 12 Examiner improperly read limitations from the Specifications into the claim, Examiner respectfully disagrees. As per claim 12, Northcutt teaches "lauch at least one application based upon the second link" (see ¶¶ 60-63; where users are provided with an interface enabling them to link to resources and tools to perform modifications or additions to the work assignment.). Northcutt et al. fail to explicitly teach a "collaboration server having a plurality of work folders associated with a plurality of owners". A collaboration server "comprises any suitable combination of hardware and software that runs MICROSOFT EXCHANGE, LOTUS NOTES, NOVELL GROUPWISE, or any other suitable communications software that provides an arrangement of work folders and/or administrative folders" (see Specification page 10). If collaboration server is running MICROSOFT OUTLOOK, work folders may comprise public folders that link to a task list, a calendar, an inbox, or any other suitable component or tool of MICROSOFT OUTLOOK" (see specification page 10). Ouchi et al., in an analogous art, teach a "collaboration server having a plurality of work folders associated with a plurality of owners" (see ¶ 4, 150, 62-63, and 162 - 163; where the workflow system uses software that runs Microsoft Exchange or Lotus Notes. Each owner has a unique email address that specifies an in-box for each user. Users have in-boxes and outboxes, which are folders associated with those users.). The advantage of this feature is that it facilitates communication with remote users in that they only

need simple email programs such as Microsoft Outlook. It would have been obvious, at the time of the invention, to one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the feature of a “collaboration server having a plurality of work folders associated with a plurality of owners” taught by Ouchi et al. with the Northcutt et al. system in order to facilitate communication with remote users, which is a goal of Ouchi et al. (see ¶ 4). Claim 12 further recites the limitation to “retrieve at least one of the evaluation, the recording, or the survey based on the first link” which is already addressed by the rejection of claim 10; therefore the same rejection applies to this claim.

In response to Applicants' argument Examiner improperly read limitations from the Specifications into the claim as per claim 12, Examiner respectfully disagrees. Pending claims are “given their broadest reasonable interpretation consistent with the specification.” See *Phillips v. AWH Corp.*, 415 F.3d 1303, 75 USPQ2d 1321 (Fed. Cir. 2005) and MPEP 2111. Examiner interpreted a collaboration server to be a combination of hardware and software with suitable communications software that provides an arrangement of work folders and/or administrative folders. Examiner submits that this interpretation is both reasonable and consistent with the Specification.

In response to Applicants' argument Northcutt and Ouchi fail to teach new independent claim 38, Examiner respectfully disagrees. Applicants set for analogous arguments from claim 1 towards claim 38 and therefore Examiner reiterates the rejection for claim 1 for claim 38.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. Claims 1-11, 24-34, and 38 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Northcutt et al. (U.S. Patent Publication No. 20030126001).

As per claim 1, Northcutt et al. teach:

A system for processing work items, comprising:

a dispatcher operable to (see ¶¶ 10, 12, and 13; where a centralized workflow management system collects and dispatches work items to members.):

receive a plurality of messages (see ¶ 10; where the system is enabled to receive input regarding work items. Users of the system submit requests for service, in the form of a message.); and

an active work server communicatively coupled to the dispatcher and operable to (see ¶¶ 10, 12, and 13; where the workflow management system serves as an active work server.):

receive work information associated with at least one message determined by the dispatcher to be associated with a work assignment (see ¶ 65; where a manager receives information submitted by a requestor for work to be done. This information received is work information and is associated to an RFS, the work assignment.);

create a work item associated with the at least one message based at least in part upon the work information, wherein the work item comprises an owner identifier

(see ¶ 65; where a manager assigns the work item to a person responsible to complete the work assignment.); and

communicate the work item to an owner associated with the owner identifier (see ¶ 65; where the work assignment is communicated to the person deemed responsible for completing that work assignment. The communication can be done via email.).

Northcutt et al. fail to explicitly teach to “determine if any of the plurality of messages is associated with a work assignment”. It is old and well-known in the art to “determine if any of a plurality of messages is associated with a work assignment”. The advantage of this feature is that it enables the proper organization of information in that the appropriate personnel are associated with the appropriate information. It would have been obvious, at the time of the invention, to one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the feature to “determine if any of a plurality of messages is associated with a work assignment” with the Northcutt et al. system in order to facilitate the proper management of information, which is a goal of Northcutt et al. (see ¶ 2).

As per claim 2, Northcutt et al. does not expressly teach the specific data recited; however, these differences are only found in the non-functional descriptive material and are not functionally involved in the steps recited nor do they alter the recited structural elements. The recited method steps would be performed the same regardless of the specific data. Further, the structural elements remain the same regardless of the specific data. Thus, this descriptive material will not distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art in terms of patentability, see *In re Gulack*, 703 F.2d 1381, 1385, 217

USPQ 401, 404 (Fed. Cir. 1983); In re Lowry, 32 F.3d 1579, 32 USPQ2d 1031 (Fed. Cir. 1994); MPEP § 2106.

As per claim 3, Northcutt et al. teach:

The system of claim 1, wherein each message comprises work information if it is associated with a work assignment (see ¶ 65; where each message or RFS submitted is associated with a work request or assignment.).

As per claim 4, Northcutt et al. teach:

The system of claim 1, wherein the work information further comprises work instructions to perform the work assignment (see ¶¶ 65 and 67-69; where each submitted work request contains specific information on the work to be completed. The manager or IT person involved line items specific instructions relating to cost. Furthermore, task information may be entered.).

As per claim 5, Northcutt et al. teach:

The system of claim 4, wherein the work item further comprises the work instructions (see ¶¶ 65 and 67-69; where each submitted work request contains specific information on the work to be completed. The manager or IT person involved line items specific instructions relating to cost. Furthermore, task information may be entered.).

As per claim 6, Northcutt et al. teach:

The system of claim 1, wherein the work information further comprises a work type (see ¶ 66; where the work information has a category code, which is the same as a work type.).

As per claim 7, Northcutt et al. teach:

The system of claim 6, wherein the work item further comprises the work type (see ¶ 67; where the work information is broken down in to categories and each category has a category code and cost associated with it. The category code is the same as a work type.).

Claim 8 recites limitations already addressed by the rejection of claim 2; therefore the same rejection applies to this claim.

As per claim 9, Northcutt et al. teach:

The system of claim 8, wherein the work information further comprises a link to the received message (see ¶¶ 66 and 68; where a link is communicated to the owner of a RFS and to the submitter of the RFS.).

Claim 9 further recites limitations already addressed by the rejection of claim 2; therefore the same rejections apply to this claim.

As per claim 10, Northcutt et al. teach “the work item further comprises a first link to the received message” (see ¶¶ 66 and 68; where a link is communicated to the owner of a RFS and to the submitter of the RFS.). Claim 10 further recites limitations already addressed by the rejection of claim 2; therefore the same rejections apply to this claim.

As per claim 11, Northcutt et al. teach:

The system of claim 10, wherein the work item further comprises a second link to at least one application used to perform the work assignment (see ¶¶ 60-63; where users are provided with an interface enabling them to link to resources and tools to perform modifications or additions to the work assignment.).

Claims 24-34 are for a method reciting the same limitations already rejected under the system claims of 1-11; therefore the rejections of claims 1-18 are applied to claims 24-34.

As per claim 38, Northcutt teaches “A system for processing work items in a call center environment, comprising: A dispatcher operable to” (see ¶¶ 10, 12, and 13; where a centralized workflow management system collects and dispatches work items to members.); “Receive a plurality of messages each comprising a session summary associated with a session between a call center representative of the call center and a caller to the call center” (see ¶ 10; where the system is enabled to receive input regarding work items. Users of the system submit requests for service, in the form of a message. The messages are a summary of the work requested and a service representative can add or modify information to the request. This active message serves as a summary of the interactions between the requestor and the service representatives.); “and An active work server communicatively coupled to the dispatcher and operable to: Receive work information associated with at least one message determined by the dispatcher to be associated with a work assignment” (see ¶ 65; where a manager receives information submitted by a requestor for work to be done. This information received is work information and is associated to an RFS, the work assignment.); “Create a work item associated with the at least one message based at least in part upon the work information, wherein the work item comprises an owner identifier” (see ¶ 65; where a manager assigns the work item to a person responsible to complete the work assignment.); “and Communicate the work item to an owner

associated with the owner identifier for performance of the work assignment associated with the work item" (see ¶ 65; where the work assignment is communicated to the person deemed responsible for completing that work assignment. The communication can be done via email.). Claim 38 further recites the limitation "Determine if any of the plurality of messages is associated with a work assignment, a work assignment comprising one or more of completing an evaluation of a session, reviewing a recording associated with a session, and reviewing a survey associated with a session" which has already been addressed by the rejections of claims 1, 2, and 8; therefore the same rejections apply to this claim as well.

7. Claims 12-18 and 35-37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Northcutt et al. (U.S. Patent Publication No. 20030126001) in view of Ouchi et al. (U.S. Patent Publication No. 20030023675).

As per claim 12, Northcutt teaches "lauch at least one application based upon the second link" (see ¶¶ 60-63; where users are provided with an interface enabling them to link to resources and tools to perform modifications or additions to the work assignment.). Northcutt et al. fail to explicitly teach a "collaboration server having a plurality of work folders associated with a plurality of owners". A collaboration server "comprises any suitable combination of hardware and software that runs MICROSOFT EXCHANGE, LOTUS NOTES, NOVELL GROUPWISE, or any other suitable communications software that provides an arrangement of work folders and/or administrative folders" (see Specification page 10). If collaboration server is running MICROSOFT OUTLOOK, work folders may comprise public folders that link to a task

list, a calendar, an inbox, or any other suitable component or tool of MICROSOFT OUTLOOK" (see specification page 10). Ouchi et al., in an analogous art, teach a "collaboration server having a plurality of work folders associated with a plurality of owners" (see ¶ 4, 150, 62-63, and 162 - 163; where the workflow system uses software that runs Microsoft Exchange or Lotus Notes. Each owner has a unique email address that specifies an in-box for each user. Users have in-boxes and outboxes, which are folders associated with those users.). The advantage of this feature is that it facilitates communication with remote users in that they only need simple email programs such as Microsoft Outlook. It would have been obvious, at the time of the invention, to one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the feature of a "collaboration server having a plurality of work folders associated with a plurality of owners" taught by Ouchi et al. with the Northcutt et al. system in order to facilitate communication with remote users, which is a goal of Ouchi et al. (see ¶ 4). Claim 12 further recites the limitation to "retrieve at least one of the evaluation, the recording, or the survey based on the first link" which is already addressed by the rejection of claim 10; therefore the same rejection applies to this claim.

Claim 13 recites limitations already addressed by the rejection of claim 12; therefore the same rejection applies to this claim.

As per claim 14, Northcutt et al. fail to explicitly teach the work folder is operable to store the work item. Ouchi et al., in an analogous art, teach working folders operable to store work items (see ¶¶ 62-63, 130, 150, and 162 – 163; where users can store the work items in their in-boxes. The email system further stores sent emails in order to

recover lost emails.). The advantage of this feature is to facilitate communication with offline and remote users. It would have been obvious, at the time of the invention, to one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the feature of the work folder operable to store the work item taught by Ouchi et al. with the Northcutt et al. system in order to facilitate communication with offline and remote users, which is a goal of Ouchi et al. (see ¶ 4).

As per claim 15, Northcutt et al. fail to explicitly teach a “the collaboration server is operable to present the work item to the owner using a communication tool”. Ouchi et al., in an analogous art, teach “the collaboration server is operable to present the work item to the owner using a communication tool” (see ¶ 4, 62-63, and 162 - 163; where the workflow system uses software that runs Microsoft Exchange or Lotus Notes. Microsoft Exchange or Outlook and Lotus Notes are communication tools.). The advantage of this feature is to facilitate communication with offline and remote users. It would have been obvious, at the time of the invention, to one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the feature of “the collaboration server is operable to present the work item to the owner using a communication tool” taught by Ouchi et al. with the Northcutt et al. system in order to facilitate communication with offline and remote users, which is a goal of Ouchi et al. (see ¶ 4).

As per claim 16, Northcutt et al. fail to explicitly teach the “collaboration server is operable to organize a plurality of work items associated with a particular owner”. Ouchi et al., in an analogous art, teach the “collaboration server is operable to organize a plurality of work items associated with a particular owner” (see ¶¶ 62-63, 130, 150, and 162 – 163; where users can store the work items in their in-boxes. The user is enabled

to operate a plurality of sorts on the items within the in-box to determine a priority order. One such sort is sorting by date.). The advantage of this feature is again to facilitate communication with remote users. It would have been obvious, at the time of the invention, to one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the feature of the “collaboration server is operable to organize a plurality of work items associated with a particular owner” taught by Ouchi et al. with the Northcutt et al. system in order to facilitate communication with remote users, which is a goal of Ouchi et al. (see ¶ 4).

As per claim 17, Northcutt et al. fail to explicitly teach the “active work server is operable to create a work folder for the owner indicated by the owner identifier” and “further operable to communicate the work item to the created work folder”. Ouchi et al, in an analogous art, teach “active work server is operable to create a work folder for the owner indicated by the owner identifier” (see ¶ 4, 150, 62-63, and 162 - 163; where the workflow system uses software that runs Microsoft Exchange or Lotus Notes. Each owner has a unique email address that specifies an in-box for each user. Users have in-boxes and outboxes, which are folders associated with those users.) and “further operable to communicate the work item to the created work folder” (see ¶ 4, 150, 62-63, and 162 – 163; where work items are communicated via email.). The advantage of these features is to facilitate communication with offline and remote users. It would have been obvious, at the time of the invention, to one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the features of “active work server is operable to create a work folder for the owner indicated by the owner identifier” and “further operable to communicate the work item to the created work folder” taught by Ouchi et al. with the Northcutt et al. system in

order to facilitate communication with offline and remote users, which is a goal of Ouchi et al. (see ¶ 4).

As per claim 18, Northcutt teaches a web server operable to exclude outsiders from reaching sensitive information (see ¶ 77; where the system can be run on the web enabled to restrict access to outsiders.). Northcutt et al. fail to explicitly teach to “verify the identity of an owner” and “provide the owner access to an associated work folder via the user agent, in response to verifying the identity of the owner”. It is old and well-known in the art to authenticate users’ access to a system and direct the user to information or date associated with the user. The advantage of authenticating users and redirecting them to information associated to them is that it provides an additional layer of information security. It would have been obvious, at the time of the invention, to one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the features of “verify the identity of an owner” and “provide the owner access to an associated work folder via the user agent, in response to verifying the identity of the owner” with the Northcutt et al. system in order to provide an additional layer of information security, which is a goal of Northcutt (see ¶ 77).

Claims 35-37 are for a method reciting the same limitations already rejected under the system claims of 12, 14, and 17; therefore the rejections of claims 12, 14, and 17 are applied to claims 35-37.

Conclusion

8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Kalyan K. Deshpande whose telephone number is (571)272-5880. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8am-5pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tariq Hafiz can be reached on (571) 272-6729. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

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